

Being Pretend

Small Group Questions



Introduction:

We are going to talk today about Slippery Slopes---Describe the next few weeks will be noted as the Slippery Slopes, explain what they are and why they are pertinent. (Story of my skiing experience...meeting the grass) We have things just like the grass in my story where we get slipped up in life. There are things that are real that are causing us to “slip” when we should be standing. We will talk about one tonight. **Slippery Slope #1- Trying to Be Something We’re NOT** (Acts 5:1-10) Here this couple was pretending to be a generous couple. They were trying to blend into the Christian mold that was being made; by them saying they were giving everything they had, they were attempting to be as “Christian” as the next guy. Had they been honest that their heart wasn’t fully in it, God probably would’ve spared their lives and helped them on their way to the heart change they so needed. Tell: Me and Batman Poopy Pants

Discussion:

- When have you tried to be a different person? When who you are?
- Why do you think this is a slippery slope in life?
- Where do you see yourself “pretending” the most?

Explanation:

We all have a tendency to try and be something we’re not. We try to use that “pretend” self to fit in, but it’s just a mask we wear...it’s not real. Finding out who you really are is key to battling this slippery slope

- Why do you wear “masks” in different settings?
- How can Jesus cause you to be who you are?
- How well do you know yourself?
- Where do you find yourself most being yourself?

Application:

-Jesus has SO MUCH more to offer than the masks we wear

-READ Ephesians 2:10- Who does this say we are? How can we live this way in life?

-FOR TAKE HOME: Challenge the teens to take off the masks they wear and to truly be who God is making them to be by asking their christian friends to hold them accountable to being 1 person in all places

Hyperreality

Small Group Questions



Introduction:

Today is Slippery Slope #2 Giving into the Hype- Hyperreality; Hyperreality is a term that means that often we cannot tell the difference between what advertising tells us about products, places, and people and what they are like in the real world. Illustration- A front cover magazine model-- We have been tricked into believing that what's on TV, or in magazines is what reality is like. You most of all have been effected because this type of advertising has surrounded your whole life. The sad bit is...it's not real. Real life doesn't look that way **Slippery Slope #2- Giving into the Hype.** Matthew 6:31-34 This may sound crazy to all of you, but the only thing worth seeking is the Kingdom of God through Jesus Christ. Nothing else this world offers is worth seeking. All the things you see on TV, all the experiences you see people having are not worth seeking; only the Kingdom of God. The hyperreality that is pictured for you will always leave you empty...because it isn't real. It's a plastic image of life that has no real flesh on it!

Discussion:

Our world is full of false advertising and false promises that make us desire things we can't have. We believe that if only we can have those things, happiness would be ours.

- What's one commercial you've seen that promised you something?
- What does axe promise will happen to a guy via the commercial?
- What's one thing you feel you have to have?

Explanation:

Hyperreality is an attempt to make you feel the need for certain things, making those things better than reality.

- What would you be willing to do in order to get an iPhone? An iPod Touch? and HD TV? The next pair of Jordans?
- Why do we seek to find happiness in created things rather than the creator?

Application:

God is our ultimate happiness, not stuff. Hyperreality promises something only God can deliver.

-FOR TAKE HOME- Challenge the teens to look at all the false promises they are given in "stuff" and then challenge them to read Matthew 6:31-34 again to know God will provide for them. Ask them to have one student or leader help them with the "hype" when they see them stepping into it.

What We Do w/Temptation

Small Group Questions



Introduction:

Video on temptation plus an explanation; **Slippery Slope #3- What We Do w/Temptation**; James 1:13-14; 1 Corinthians 10:13; James 4:7; Matthew 4:1-11

All of these scripture verses give GREAT tools to add to our lives when it comes to temptation.

First, where does the desire to sin come from? It's inside of us! Knowing this helps us deflect the temptation, we stop blaming others (even Satan) and we can ask God to deal directly with our hearts! Next we see that God won't allow temptation to overtake us...we just have to be willing to resist the sin and God will help us. If we want to sin, we can and we will. Lastly, the next verse gives us hope and the most important tool of all.

Resisting Satan and the temptation that exist within is done by submitting ourselves to God. This means we let God rule our lives, not our own desires! We allow God to direct us and we can't go wrong!

Discussion:

Temptation effects us all. Temptation is not a sin...Jesus was tempted!(Matthew 4:1-11).

- What temptations do you find yourself always falling into?
- What's one way you can flee Satan?
- Who can you ask to help you during temptation? Who can you call on the phone to help as well?

Explanation:

Rejecting the Tempter (Satan) isn't always easy. He's a good liar and makes things he knows we want to do but shouldn't look very good.

- What are some of the tactics that Satan uses to tempt you? What do you feel is "so cool, or so right" when you do it, but later feel horrible about doing?
- What is it that Satan evil desires do you sometimes have, that help feed temptation?
- God always gives us a way out. What are some ways out you can see during temptations that you can escape through?

Application:

-Jesus used the Word of God to defend against Temptation. He knew His Word and was able to make Satan look a fool. Studying the Word is the only way we can do this.

FOR TAKE HOME- Take the Bible reading challenge. Take the handout and read through those scriptures at least 5 times this coming week. Prizes to those who actually do it!

Our Peeps

Small Group Questions



Introduction:

Anakin Skywalker illustration- his bad company with Senator Palpatine. **Slippery Slope #4- The Company We Keep**

“Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.” (1 Corinthians 15:33)

The people we hang out with can help not only to define what we do, but who we are. I am not saying not to hang out with non-Christians. I am however saying that you need to be careful who you hang out with. You need to ask yourself: how are these people influencing me and my life. If you find yourself getting mixed up in all kinds of trouble because of who you hang out with, you have to re-evaluate who your friends are.

Discussion:

The people we hang with can either negatively or positively influence us. It’s easier to pull people down than it is to pull people up.

- Give some examples of people you know who have fallen into the wrong or right crowd .
- After those people fell into that crowd, what happened to them? How have their lives turned out?
- Who are some people in your “top 5” that may not be so great for you?

Explanation:

People are natural influencers. Some for the good and others for the bad. These people can be siblings, best friends or even cousins. Our goal in life should be to Know God and to make Him known. If we are hanging with people that are making us forget this, we should try to change somethings.

- Are there any people you need to flee from, like Joseph and Potiphar’s wife?
- Are there other ways you can NOT be poorly influenced by your “bad friends” than just ditching them? If so, how?
- Jesus hung out with some rough company, but wasn’t influenced for the bad. How can we do this same thing in our lives?

Application:

FOR TAKE HOME- Ask the kids to think hard about who causes them to do bad things. Ask them to seek God and you leaders On how they can make a change so they are no longer poorly influenced by those friends.

Jesus Over All

Small Group Questions



Introduction:

Zola and Curtis believed the hype of the “big life”. They both thought that true happiness could be found in money, drugs, sex and fame...they were sourly mistaken. Once they found Jesus, they desired the new life that Jesus offered and they found that it was better! The bible has great ways of getting over this hype and finding out that this way of life is just plain....not worth it! **Slippery Slope #5- Jesus Over All:** Romans 12:2; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:22; Phil. 3:8-9 These Scriptures give clear insight as to how to connect with God. We need to become new creations and be constantly renewed by this new Life. God is the only thing worth living for and for that matter dying for. God, living in us can change our lives, nothing else in this world can. Nothing else matters but Jesus, as Paul so forcefully stated. Why seek after trash when you can have to ultimate life: life with Jesus.

Discussion:

When have you found yourself on the slope of replacing Jesus?

-What do you think would've happened to Marv if he was a movie star?

-What about the hype of the world makes you desire to go that route?

Explanation:

The hype of the world is highly attractive and many people who have claimed to know Jesus have been ruined by it: Ben Roethlisberger; Britney Spears; Jessica Simpson

- How can the Holy Spirit help us with this struggle?

- Is the end result of drugs, sex and fame as a lifestyle really worth it? Why or why not?

-Why do you think Jesus made a way for us to worship Him and Him alone?

Application:

FOR TAKE HOME- READ: Romans 12:1-2 and ask the students how they can do what this Scripture asks. Then, challenge them to put their answers into practice.

CHALLENGE: Share from the piece of paper you wrote on which things you've found have replaced Jesus in your life. Ask your small group to challenge you each week by asking you about those things. Hand your paper to your leader (if you're comfortable) so they can ask you each week as well.

Using Our Mouths

Small Group Questions



Introduction:

Girl from Nyack illustration. This girl underwent tons of issues due to people's words, especially that one young man's remarks. I use this story a lot when it comes to the idea of how we use our mouths because it is so powerful. She didn't know who she was, except for who people said she was. We need to realize that our mouths are slippery slopes. We shouldn't just be saying whatever comes to mind. Our mouths also reveal our hearts! **Slippery Slope #6- Using Our Mouths** Luke 6:45; James 1:26; James 3:1-10: Our mouths reveal our hearts. If we have junk and trash in our hearts, our mouths will reveal that. How often do you make fun of people? How often do you talk bad about someone? Now think: how often do you encourage people? How often do you lift someone up in front of others by what you say? If we want to follow Christ with our hearts, our mouths will follow suit. If we don't want to, our mouths will have nothing but death in them. Our words effect people in big ways!

Discussion:

Sticks and stones may break my bones but words may never hurt me is a lie! Our words wound and hurt and we ourselves are hurt by the words of others.

- When were you hurt by words? What was said?
- Who have you been mean to by your words? What was said?
- Why is the poor usage of our words a slippery slope?

Explanation:

Having control of our mouths allows us to better steer our lives.

- Why do you think a persons heart speaks out of the mouth (Luke 6:45)? If Jesus is right, why do people have so much junk in their hearts?
- Is the point controlling the mouth, or is the point allowing God to fix the heart?
- How can we allow God to fix our hearts?

Application:

FOR TAKE HOME- God doesn't want you to just do good things, or say nice things...God wants to change your hearts! He wants to clean the junk out of our lives and give us a new heart (2 Cor. 5:17) CHALLENGE: do you want this new heart? If you have this new heart, will you allow God to continually clean your heart?